

Tale *Feathers*

May-June
2007

Volume 74
Number 4

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....and MORE

Be sure to visit
our website to
get any new info
after publication.



BIRDS, BEASTS AND BEAUTY OF BOTSWANA

May General Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, May 15 at 7:30 p.m. at Powder
Valley Nature Center.

The Okavanga Delta and Chobe National Park, both in north eastern Botswana comprise the largest natural area remaining on the African continent. The Okavanga has the only inland delta in the world, created by the rivers termination in the midst of the Kalahari Desert. Torrey Berger will be sharing photos of his recent trip to the area. You will see the "Big Five" and numerous other mammals as well as the fascinating bird life of the area. Cheetahs, Wild Dogs, Hippos, Hornbills, Rollers, Bee Eaters and Elephants galore (the Chobe herd is 45,000 strong), these, and many more, will join us on this Safari through the most exotic wetlands on earth.

St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities

and

Announcements

Mission Statement
of
The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

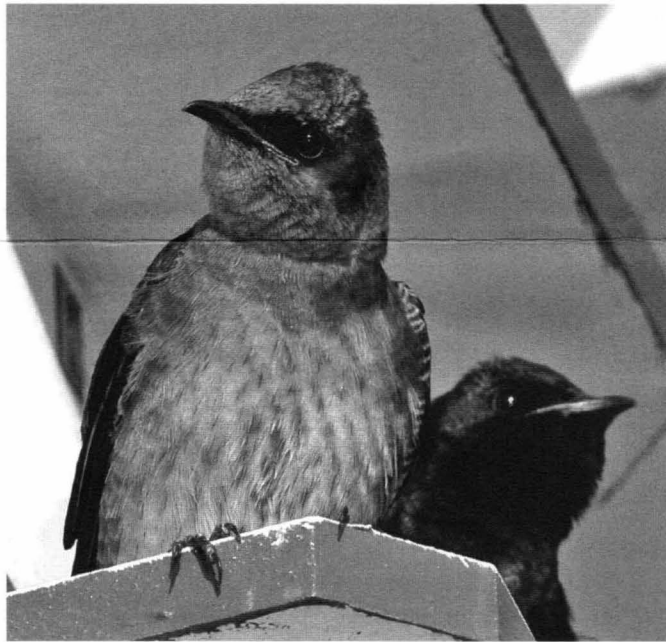
Goals
To foster an
awareness and
understanding
of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our
community so
people can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

Special Purple Martin Excursion In Forest Park

This is a new bird-walk opportunity for our members! On Saturday, June 16, 2007, Starting at 8:00 a.m., John Miller, our guest speaker at the March General Membership meeting, will conduct a bird walk at Probst Golf Course in Forest Park. The golf course is located at the west end of Forest Park. Parking along Lagoon Drive or in the course parking lot is recommended. Mr. Miller, a St. Louis Audubon member will talk briefly about purple Martin biology, housing preferences, and answer any questions. Pending availability of nesting pairs, Mr. Miller will lower the housing so that participants can see an actual nest and learn monitoring nests for progress and potential problems, helps this human-dependent species, to thrive more fledglings.

The walk is limited to 25 persons. This is handicapped accessible, but all Participants should be cautious watching for golfers in carts on the pathway. Please contact John Miller @ 314-781-2525 to sign up.



Birding for Beginners

Saturday, June 2, 2007

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

**Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor and Education Center
5595 Grand Drive in Forest Park
Learning Lab Classroom**

Kindly RSVP to Anne Grossmann at (314) 367-7275, Ext. 14 or email to agrossmann@forestparkforever.org. Class will be limited to 25 people.

Birding Trips: May & June

John Solodar

The big spring migration is in full swing May. Lots of nesting birds area around in June. Join us for some very good birding trips.

May 2, Wednesday – Tower Grove Park – This trip to Tower Grove Park comes just before the historic peak of migration. Tower Grove has been one of the premier birding spots for many years. Pat Lueders will lead this trip starting at 7:30 AM from the Gaddy Bird Garden.

May 5, Saturday – Tower Grove Park – See above. We'll try to get another leader to help Pat Lueders with this trip as there is often a good turnout of birders.

May 6, Sunday – Chubb Trail from Lone Elk Park – Mike Brady has been finding lots of interesting birds on this trail over the last few years. A highlight is a number of Henslow's Sparrows, but lots of warblers, etc. have been seen as well. Mike will lead this trip for us starting at 7:30 AM. Be forewarned, however, that this is a 4 mile hike round trip, the sun can be harsh in the open field area and that there is a tough 3/8 mile uphill climb at the end. Bring water for certain.

May 12, Saturday – Forest Park – This St. Louis city park is the other perennially good birding park in the city. We'll start at 7:30 AM at the Kennedy Forest Trailhead off Wells Drive. The leader is not yet set, but we'll have a veteran leader there. We'll also have a separate beginner's section on this day which will follow its own course.

May 16, Wednesday – Shaw Nature Reserve/Robertsville State Park – This is billed as an all day trip starting at Shaw Nature Reserve and going on to Robertsville State Park. However, if you want to leave after the first half that's fine. It starts at 7:30 AM as we are within the peak of warbler migration and want to utilize as much of the morning daylight as possible. Shaw is a great place for birding with a variety of habitats (Prairie Warblers are almost guaranteed) and nearby Robertsville is attractive for Henslow's sparrows in some areas. Pat Lueders will lead this trip. Bring lunch and water.

May 19, Saturday - Columbia Bottom – We travel to the river confluence area this week to MDC's Columbia Bottom. This relatively new area is proving to be an excellent spring birding location. Orioles were plentiful the last time we did this trip on this weekend. MDC's Mike Arduser will help John Solodar lead this trip which starts at 7:30 AM. MDC has recently finished its program to install pumps for water control in large segments of Columbia Bottom and we'll see what this addition has done for the birding.

May 26, Saturday – Highway 79 Corridor – Note change in starting location from what was in the annual calendar. This area is still relatively new to most St. Louis area birders, but there are many good spots worth exploring. Josh Uffman will lead this trip starting at 7:30 AM from Winfield Lock and Dam. Josh will hit the Winfield area, B.K. Leach and will choose from a variety of others such as Prairie Slough, the sod farms, etc. Plan on an all day trip and bring lunch and water.

June 2, Saturday – Lost Valley Trail - Lost Valley is one of the premier locations in St. Louis to find warblers, especially Cerulean. There are lots of other warblers, sparrows, probably

Red-Shouldered Hawks in flight here as well. Mike Grant is our leader and the trip starts at 7:30 AM.

June 9, Saturday – Busch/Weldon Springs – This entire area is a great haven for birds. The trip will start at Busch and go on to various parts of the Weldon Springs area including the Katy Trail access with its Painted Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks. Josh Uffman is our leader and the trip commences at 7:30 AM.

June 23, Saturday – Lost Valley Trail – It may sound crazy, but about a dozen of us took this trip last year which runs from 5:45 AM – 9:00 AM. We had lots of good birds and beat the heat of the day, especially along the trail back from the beaver pond. Mike Grant will lead this trip again.

How to get there

Busch Conservation Area - Take U.S.40/I-64 west into St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south from U.S. 40 about 1 mile to the traffic light at Hwy D. Turn right and go about 1.5 miles to the entrance on the right. Turn left at the "T" to Hampton Lake and meet in the parking lot.

Chubb Trail from Lone Elk Park – From I-44 take the Hwy 141 North exit then the first right to get to the north outer road. Go west on the north outer road following the signs to Lone Elk Park. After a bit of driving on the Lone Elk Park road park on the shoulder just past the gate to the World Bird Sanctuary.

Columbia Bottom - Take Riverview Blvd north from the northern leg of I-270 (the last exit in Missouri before I-270 crosses into Illinois) and go 2.8 miles to Columbia Bottom entrance on the right. Go 1.7 miles and meet at the River Access Parking lot on the left.

Forest Park - Take Hampton Ave north from I-64 (Hwy 40 to locals) in St. Louis City. To access the Kennedy Forest Trailhead turn left onto Wells Drive at the first traffic light after Hampton crosses over I-64/Hwy 40. Follow Wells past the Zoo and look for the MDC trailhead signs on the right. Park in the inner area of the circle. Alternatively, take Wells Drive from Skinker, stay to the right until you see the MDC trailhead sign on the left.

Highway 79 Corridor - Starting point is the parking lot at Winfield Lock and Dam. From I-70 take Hwy 79 north 14 miles to Winfield. Barely 100 yards past Winfield is a bridge and a sign to County Rd N to the right. Drive about 3 miles on this road until you see a sign to the Lock and Dam. Turn left here, go over the slough and park in the parking lot.

Lost Valley Trail – From the intersection of Hwy 40 and Hwy 94 just over the Missouri River in St. Charles County, take hwy 94 south (the signs may say west, but you are going south) 5.7 miles to the Lost Valley Trailhead on the right.

Shaw Nature Reserve - - I-44 west from I-270 to Gray Summit (Hwy 100). Cross over I-44 on Hwy 100. Follow Hwy 100 one block right to the entrance. (Entrance fee \$3.00 per person.)

**A MEMORIAL TO
JAMES N. HOLSEN II –
PASSIONATE CONSERVATIONIST**

BY
Paul Bauer

Jim had many facets to his long life of 82 years. He had a strong background in science and engineering that helped him effectively articulate his feelings about nature and conservation issues with a passion. Only recently we learn that he served as an infantry combat soldier in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II; I never heard him speak of that experience. Many of us know of Jim's tireless devotion to caring for his wife, Margo, during her severe and protracted illness which ended last summer. Throughout their years of marriage we often saw them birding together on weekends. Margo was active with WGNSS birding activities, and Jim was active for many years with St. Louis Audubon. Maybe Jim was wise enough not to compete with Margo!

Jim Holsen was a professor of Chemical Engineering at Washington University in St. Louis for an extended period. Also, he volunteered for an opportunity to teach engineering at Kabul University in Afghanistan for a total of five years. His fascinating slide show portrayed the people and culture that he and his family experienced during that adventure. After that overseas assignment, Jim joined McDonnell-Douglas. We were in the same engineering department, and I got to know of Jim's strong interests in birds, nature and the inter-related conservation issues.

Jim became active in the St. Louis Audubon Society, and served as V.P. of Conservation prior to serving as President. He was awarded the prestigious Dr. Robert J. Terry Award for his numerous dedicated efforts to St. Louis Audubon. His last efforts for the society included an extensive history of St. Louis Audubon that was to be completed for the ninetieth anniversary in 2006.

Our last efforts together were to incorporate some photographs of earlier leaders, and to update an earlier text to the present. Jim's devotion to helping Margo for the last several years prevented a timely conclusion to the history project; hopefully those efforts could be completed in his honor.

I believe, Jim would most want to be remembered for his passionate efforts to influence numerous local conservation issues. Many of his feelings were effectively expressed on the editorial pages of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Selected topics that come to mind include: Against the Page Avenue extension cutting through Creve Coeur Lake Park; For a seasonal surge and later drawdown of water flow on the Missouri River; for protecting the Forest 44 Green Corridor intact without development; Against chip mills and clear cutting forests; Not more roads and ATV use in the Mark Twain NF; and contributions to The Upper Mississippi River Basin Management Plan.

Some of these issues are closed and resolved, while other require our continued influence for a favorable outcome. Our legacy to Jim Holsen should include a dedicated effort to passionately continue these worthy crusades.



Extinction means: Gone Forever!

By Paul Bauer

The book, "*Birds of the St. Louis Area: Where and When to Find Them*", will soon become extinct: no longer existing! All printed copies will have been sold.

The initial printing of 3000 copies was sold out in 18 months. The 1998 Revised Edition of 2100 copies with 80 revisions is nearly gone. A push is on to sell the remaining copies this year. Reprinting without another revision is not practical, nor is it financially sensible. Any new revisions for a few new bird species, or several added birding locations, can be provided on the WGNSS web site at no cost to WGNSS or to the birder.

This spring may be the last chance to obtain a copy if you are a new birder, or new to the St. Louis area. For experienced birders with well worn copies, now is your final chance to get a fresh copy of the 17 color maps, 343 bar graphs of seasonal abundance, and 380 species accounts with rare dates and likely locations. Did I forget to mention detailed directions to 125 birding locations all within 50 mile of the St. Louis city limits? Consider buying a spare copy to sell to future new birders!!

WHERE CAN YOU OBTAIN A COPY OF THIS UNIQUE REGIONAL BIRD BOOK?

(All of these locations have been recently restocked.)

MDC Powder Valley & MDC Busch C.A.

Gift Shops

Missouri Botanical Garden & Shaw Nature Reserve

Gift Shops

Wild Bird Center; 5438 Southfield Center;

314/842-1496

Wild Birds Unlimited; 9987 Manchester Road;

314/821-2266

BY MAIL: American Birding Assoc.;

1-800-634-7736; Item 308.

If your local wild bird store doesn't have copies, ask them to contact Randy Korotev; 314/993-0055. Randy has agreed to deliver any remaining orders. Also, if you are on any scheduled local birding trips, ask me; I have about 12 copies left. Decide quickly if you need a new copy of this exceptional local birding Resource.

Remember: OUT OF PRINT = EXTINCTION.

SLAS Annual Awards Recognize Education, Conservation

At the SLAS Banquet on Friday evening April 13, several people were recognized for outstanding contributions to our mission of wildlife conservation. Our Outstanding Conservationist Award winner was Ken Cohen in acknowledgement for his many years of volunteer efforts towards improving the ecology of Forest Park. The increase in biological diversity and therefore bird sightings in the park attest to the effectiveness of the dedication of people such as Ken. Nikki Davenport, a teacher at Jackson Park School in University City was named our Outstanding Educator. Mrs. Davenport has incorporated ornithology into her traditional classroom teaching in such a way as to stimulate interest in birding from a very young age: obviously the key to "breeding" new generations of conservationists. Audubon's very own Educator is Sharon Nickl, who was voted Outstanding Volunteer. Sharon and her Education Committee team impact hundreds of school children each year through presentations about birds, butterflies, reptiles, etc. Every month of the year they take on the tremendously important job of spreading the environmental message of our organization to the adults of tomorrow. Finally, three PhD candidates at the University of Missouri St. Louis who are doing ornithological research were the recipients of our graduate student scholarship funds. They will use the monies to continue their research in areas such as Panama and the Galapagos where some of our Midwestern birds spend the winter. Other SLAS funds are given annually to local teachers who attend Audubon camps as well as to Science Fair participants whose projects relate to the Audubon conservation mission. We especially would like for all those of you who consider donating to SLAS to be aware of some of the beneficial ways that our funds are directed.

Lynne Breakstone and Julie Leeman,
SLAS Awards and Scholarships Committee
*Pictures from the Annual Banquet can be
viewed on our website.*

President's Report Torrey Berger

With the end of April, and our enjoyable and informative annual Awards Dinner, another busy year at SLAS comes to a close. Over the last few years, it seems that we are getting involved in more and more new projects with more and more new partners. For a comprehensive look at the accomplishments for the year, you can go to the Annual Committee Reports which are available at our website.

Of course, nothing would be happening without the hard work and dedication of our "hands-on" Board and committee members. As President, I consider myself extremely lucky to have had such an active and successful team, and it appears that with the recent elections, we are set for another productive year in 2007-08. Special thanks to Ted Heisel, Julie Leemann and Sue Gustafson, who are retiring from the Board. Julie will remain active on the Awards Committee, and Sue will continue as our representative to the Missouri IBA committee, among other tasks. Thanks also to Sharon Nickl, our retiring Vice President – Education and Linda Tossing, retiring as Vice President – Conservation. Of course, they cannot get away that easy, so Sharon will remain on the Board and continue on the Education Committee and Linda will also remain a Board member and continue as our representative to the Steering Committee of Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative.

We are pleased to welcome Vicki Flier, for a return term as Vice President – Education, and Karen Meyer as our new Vice President – Conservation. We also welcome Susan Krupa to the Board as she joins returning members elected to the Class of 2010, Linda Tossing, Sharon Nickl, Joel Porath, Eric Jeltres and Mary Dueren. Add to these our returning officers, John Solodar, Vice President – Finance, Linda Zurfluh, Secretary, Dave Rogles, Treasurer and the other two returning classes of Board members, and in my opinion, you have the ingredients for the classic Dream Team that makes the President's job an easy one. If you would like to join us and become more active in the work of one of our committees, please call me at 314-579-9227. We can always use the help!

Marsh Bird Monitoring at B.K Leach Memorial Conservation Area

In 2001, the Missouri Department of Conservation tripled the size of the wetland area of B.K. Leach Conservation Area located along the Mississippi River in northern Lincoln County. The expansion consisted of two tracts, Bittern Basin (942 acres) and King's Lake (1958 acres). Recently completed levee construction has created over 2000 acres of recovering marsh. These acres are being managed to improve nesting and brood rearing habitat for resident marsh birds by encouraging the development of marsh habitat. King rail and least bittern nests have already been discovered on the Bittern Basin Unit.

During the 2005 and 2006 season St. Louis Audubon Society worked with Brian Loges, the manager of B K Leach, to monitor marsh bird activity in the new marsh areas. We are going to do this again in 2007 and need the help of anyone who can attend. Those of you who have done this in the past know how much fun this can be and how beautiful it is to be on the marsh on a warm June evening. You do not need to be an expert at identifying these birds. We will work by using playback tapes for each bird and listening for responses from the marsh. The program is targeted at determining which of eight species of birds might be nesting in the area. Species to be targeted include: Black Rail, Least Bittern, Yellow Rail, Sora, Virginia Rail, King Rail, American Bittern, and Common Moorhen.

The dates for this year's survey are all Saturdays: June 2, June 16 and June 30. Starting time on June 2 is 5:00 pm so that we can instruct and review the monitoring methodology and review last year's results. The other two dates we'll start meet at 6:15 pm. Please respond to either of the names below.

John Solodar - St. Louis Audubon Society
314-862-8294 or solodar@sbcglobal.net
Brian Loges
573-898-5905 or Brian.loges@mdc.mo.gov

Remembering Katherine M. Chambers

By Mary Dueren

Katherine Chambers was St. Louis Audubon's Board of Director's Emeritus. She passed away April 6, 2007 at the age of 104.

She lived all of her life in St. Louis, graduating from Central High School in 1919. She earned three degrees from Washington University: bachelor's in liberal arts, master's in zoology, and doctorate in education. She was also elected to both the Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi societies.

She taught science, chemistry, physics and biology at Soldan High School for more than four decades. She even assisted NASA with planning of the agency's materials in schools. She volunteered or served as a docent for many organizations: The Science Center, The Botanical Gardens, The International Institute, WGNSS, St. Louis Audubon Society and the St. Louis Nature Study Society.

She was a treasured volunteer for our chapter. For many years, she and a small group of friends would place address labels on our Audubon chapter's newsletters, sort and deliver the bundles to the bulk mailing center downtown. Even into her late nineties, she volunteered to help at Audubon booths or tables and even attend education seminars. At one of those seminars that I attend with Katherine, I watched her square dance better than most! She was late getting to an Audubon annual dinner one year because she and Marshall and Ernestine Wagner were canoeing the Meramec



Inquisitive Cardinal photo submitted by Dave Beidle.

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,200 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Mary Dueren edits the newsletter. To contact the editor, call evenings to 314-576-1473 or email: mdueren@charter.net.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2006 - 2007

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ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

St. Louis Chapter ONLY Membership Application

By using this Application, your membership dues will go directly to the St. Louis Audubon Society Chapter. Your membership dues will support local issues that are important to you, programs at our general meetings, and *Tale Feathers*, our newsletter.

Chapter Only Dues are \$15.00 per year and cover all members living at the same address.

Please complete the form, enclose a check payable to SLAS, and mail to:
St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122.

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Circle One. NEW RENEWAL

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please contact www.audubon.org for an additional application.